

Date: January 23, 2019

TO: President Trump
Members of Congress

From: Tom Ridge
Michael Chertoff
Janet Napolitano
Jeh Johnson
John Kelly

Dear President Trump and Members of Congress:

As former Secretaries of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), we write to you today with a simple message – fund the critical mission of DHS. Homeland security is national security. DHS has a vital mission: to secure the nation from the many threats we face. This requires the dedication of more than 240,000 employees in jobs that range from aviation security, law enforcement and protective services, border security, emergency preparedness and response, and federal network security to stopping human trafficking, child exploitation and transnational criminal organizations. Their duties are wide-ranging, but their goal is clear - keep America safe.

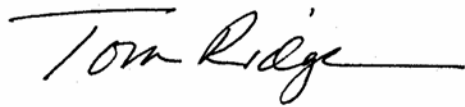
Historically, Congress has consistently voted to fund the workforce of national security agencies, such as the Department of Defense (DoD), during government shutdowns. Congress does so because putting national security at risk is an option we simply can't afford. DHS should be no different. With today's threats, there is no longer a distinction between the 'away game' and the 'home game' which is why DHS and DoD work hand in hand to defend our country. There is no political litmus test to join the Department. Instead, we ask that our dedicated professionals be willing to selflessly serve our country and to dedicate themselves to the DHS mission to secure the homeland, in many cases by putting their own lives at risk. The great men and women of DHS do this proudly- no different than those men and women who are part of DoD.

While we are heartened to learn that communities, businesses and religious organizations around the country are providing assistance to DHS employees, this cannot and should not be the answer. One of the unfortunate consequences of this shutdown is the need for some DHS employees to seek either unemployment or find another employer. It is important to note that as unattractive as these alternatives may be, like other members of the military services, members of the USCG by law, cannot quit nor can they seek full-time outside employment. DHS employees who protect the traveling public, investigate and counter terrorism, and protect critical infrastructure should not have to rely on the charitable generosity of others for assistance in feeding their families and paying their bills while they steadfastly focus on the mission at hand. This is unconscionable.

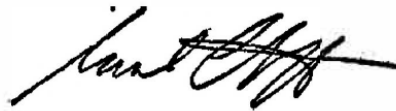
As the shutdown drags on, the Department also risks talented people leaving their posts to pursue employment in the private sector. High-tech skills – such as information technology and cybersecurity –and law enforcement and security experience are in great demand in the private sector and the Department is facing a real crisis in retaining this workforce week after week.

We are awed by the sacrifices that the men and women of DHS and their families make every day and their extraordinary service to our nation. We call on our elected leaders to restore the funding necessary to ensure our homeland remains safe and that the Department's critical national security functions continue without compromise.

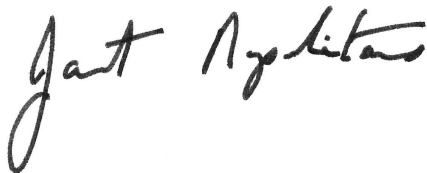
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Ridge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Tom Ridge

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Chertoff". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal line at the end.

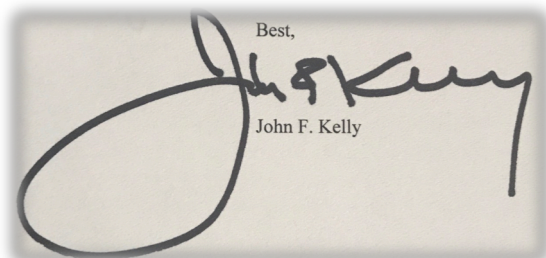
Michael Chertoff

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Janet Napolitano". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal line at the end.

Janet Napolitano

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeh Johnson". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal line at the end.

Jeh Johnson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John F. Kelly". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal line at the end. The text "Best," is written above the signature and "John F. Kelly" is written below it.